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**9TO5: THE STORY OF A MOVEMENT, DOCUMENTARY ABOUT
THE SECRETARIES WHO FOUGHT THEIR BOSSES AND
INSPIRED THE HIT MOVIE & CLASSIC DOLLY PARTON SONG,
PREMIERES ON PBS'S INDEPENDENT LENS
ON FEBRUARY 1, 2021**

New documentary from Academy Award-winning filmmakers tells the previously untold story of the national "9to5 movement" and how women created a labor movement that brought lasting change



(San Francisco, CA) January 8, 2021 — Before the hit song and Hollywood movie, “9to5” was an inspiring grassroots movement for equality that fused the spirit of both the women’s and labor movements of the 1970s. From filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, the duo behind the Academy-Award winning documentary *American Factory*, **9to5: The Story of a Movement** chronicles the waves of secretaries, starting in Boston, who in the 1970s and 80s fought to create impactful changes in their workplaces. Their ideas spread rapidly, eventually leading to a nationwide movement at the intersection of the women’s movement and the labor movement, and changed the American workforce forever.

Commended as “stirring” by *Variety* and “urgent” by *The Boston Globe*, *9to5: The Story of a Movement* premieres on PBS’s *Independent Lens* on February 1, 2021 at 10/9c ([check local listings](#)) and will also be available to stream on the PBS Video App.

In the 1970s, secretaries and clerical workers made up the largest sector of the American workforce, with over 20 million employed. Inspired by the growing Women’s Liberation Movement, secretaries Ellen Cassedy and Karen Nussbaum got mad, got organized, and started a group called “9to5.” The group grappled with class and race barriers, and deployed humor and wry publicity stunts to shame their bosses into change. Their goals were simple: better pay, job descriptions, respect, advancement opportunities, and an end to sexual harassment. What Cassedy and Nussbaum didn’t know is that similar groups were popping up in Chicago, San Francisco and other cities across the country.

Clerical workers were the low-wage workers of their era. As America confronts the growing reality of deep income inequality and commonplace sexual harassment, the stories and strategies of these bold, creative women continue to resonate deeply almost 50 years later.

Featuring interviews with 9to5 founders Nussbaum and Cassedy, actress and activist Jane Fonda, and other leaders in the movement, *9to5: The Story of a Movement* is a previously untold story, brought to life through a mixture of archival footage and newly filmed interviews from the movement's activists. *9to5* weaves a story that celebrates the strides that women have made in achieving equality, while recognizing there is a lot of work yet to be done.

"*9to5* tells a story through the words of these workers and the organizers themselves. These women are so inspiring, and as we spoke with them more, we discovered undeniable parallels to the movements happening today," said filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar. "We hope this film inspires people and shows how people can build momentum to tip the balance of worker vs. corporate power."

Lois Vossen, founding and executive producer of PBS's *Independent Lens* added, "Julia and Steve are master storytellers, highlighting parallels between then and now in the ongoing fight for women's rights, workers rights, racial justice and more. At ITVS, we create films that spark dialogue and *9to5* was a perfect fit for this season."

The 9to5 movement also famously inspired a pop culture phenomenon—the 1980 film starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton, and, of course, the catchy Parton tune that served as the film's theme. In *9to5: The Story of A Movement*, Fonda reflects on her involvement in the movement and the genuine friendships she formed with these labor organizers that still exist today.

"I met my friend Karen Nussbaum through the anti-war movement and found her stories about women in the workplace utterly jaw-dropping. I immediately knew I needed to use my voice to help amplify their stories through a film," said Jane Fonda, actress and activist. "While we've made some monumental strides for women's rights, we still have a lot of work to do. I have dedicated my life to social, political and environmental activism, and I hope that the story of the 9to5 movement will help inspire and teach the next generation of activists."

The National Endowment for the Humanities provided funding for *9to5: The Story of a Movement*. Visit the [9to5: The Story of A Movement](#) page on *Independent Lens* for more information about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS:

Julia Reichert (Co-producer/Co-Director)

Ohio-based Julia Reichert is a four-time Academy Award nominee and Oscar winner for her documentary work, which often explores class, gender and race. Julia's student film *Growing Up Female* was the first feature documentary of the modern Women's Movement, and was selected for the National Film Registry. Her films *Union Maids* and *Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists*, (with Jim Klein) were nominated for Academy Awards for Best Feature Documentary, as was *The Last Truck* (made with Steven Bognar), as a Short. Her film *A Lion in the House* (also with Bognar) premiered at Sundance and won the Primetime Emmy for Exceptional Merit in

Nonfiction Filmmaking. The couple won the 2020 Academy Award for *American Factory*. Julia is co-founder of New Day Films, the independent film distribution co-op. She was an advisor on the creation of the IFP and the PBS series P.O.V, and is co-founder of Indie Caucus. She mentored dozens of emerging filmmakers over the years as a Professor of Motion Pictures at Wright State University. Reichert is also the author of *Doing It Yourself*, the first book on self-distribution in independent film. She is a member of both the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences and the Television Academy. In 2018, the International Documentary Association (IDA) gave Julia their Career Achievement Award. In 2019, the Museum of Modern Art and the Wexner Center for the Arts teamed up to present a traveling retrospective of Julia's films. She is also a proud mom and grandma.

Steven Bognar (Co-producer/Co-Director)

Steven Bognar is an Oscar and Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker based in Ohio. With his partner Julia Reichert, he has directed and produced *American Factory* (2020 Academy Award winner), *The Last Truck* (2009 Academy Award Short nominee), and *A Lion in the House* (Primetime Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking). Their films have screened at top film festivals, and on HBO, PBS and Netflix. Bognar's first feature documentary, *Personal Belongings*, which he produced, directed & edited, premiered at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival, and screened that year at SXSW, IDFA and on P.O.V. His short films include *Last Reel* (Telluride Film Festival premiere), *Foundry Night Shift* (True/False Film Festival premiere), *No Guns for Christmas* (New York Times Op-Doc) and *Picture Day* (Sundance Film Festival premiere). He is a former Professor of Motion Pictures at Wright State University, and has guest lectured at Harvard, Yale & Stanford universities. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.

CREDITS:

Directors	Julia Reichert Steven Bognar
Producers	Julia Reichert Steven Bognar
Co-Producer	Crystal Whetstone
Cinematographer	Steven Bognar
Editor	Jaime Meyers Schlenck
Music	Wendy Blackstone

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS:

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: facebook.com/independentlens and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens)